

Do I Applaud What is Right?

The summer before my eighth-grade year I made friends with a guy named Larry. He was new to town, so I encouraged him to go out for our school football team. He could meet some guys, and being a stocky fellow, he might even make the squad. He agreed.

The result was a good news-bad news scenario. The good news? He made the cut. The bad news. He won my position. I was demoted to second string. I tried to be happy for him, but it was tough.

A few weeks into the season Larry fell off a motorcycle and broke a finger. I remember the day he stood at my front door holding up his bandaged hand. “Looks like you’re going to have to play.”

I tried to feel sorry for him, but it was hard. The passage was a lot easier for Paul to write than it was for me to practice. “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15 nasb).

You wan to plumb the depths of your love for someone? How do you feel when that person succeeds? Do you rejoice? Or are you jealous? And when he or she stumbles? Falls to misfortune? Are you really sorry? Or are you secretly pleased?

Love never celebrates misfortune. Never. I like the way Eugene Peterson translates the passage: “Love. . .doesn’t revel when others grovel, [but] takes pleasure in the flowering of truth” (msg). J.B. Phillips is equally descriptive: “Love . . .does not gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it shares the joy of those who live by the truth.”

You know your love is real when you weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. You know your love is real when you feel for others what your heavenly Father feels for you. Remember, love “rejoices whenever the truth wins out” (1 Cor. 13:6 nlt).